

# European Fisheries Fund (EFF)

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The Commission presents its seventh annual report on the implementation of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) by the commission and Member States during the course of 2013, the last year of the programme.

The main conclusions of the report are as follows:

**Financial implementation:** certified interim payments sent by Member States in 2013 totalled **EUR 544** million, compared to EUR 589 million in 2012. By 31 May 2014, EFF commitments amounted to EUR 3.413 billion. This represents an increase of 18 % over 31 May 2013 (EUR 515 million in one year).

The public national contribution up to 31 May 2014 was EUR 2.088 billion, which represents an increase of EUR 360 million over 31 May 2013 (+21 %). Over the same period, private contributions to EFF-supported measures amounted to EUR 2 497 billion.

The most significant leverage effects can be found in measures supporting modification for reassignment of fishing vessels, investments on board fishing vessels, fish processing and aquaculture.

The report notes that both commitments and certified expenditure at the level of the Member States have improved, but there is still some way to go.

By the end of 2013, only two years before the end of EFF implementation, **certified interim payments sent by the Member States represented just over half of the overall EFF allocation**. The extent of commitments at national level at this stage is significantly higher (80 %) but still below the ideal/expected 100 %.

These low figures towards the end of the programming period could mean that **Member States will not be able to make full use of 20 % of the funds available** in support of the implementation of the CFP unless additional funds are committed in the remaining time until the end of the programming period, i.e. 31 December 2015.

**Evolution per priority axis:** the report confirms the trends that were noted in previous implementation reports. Fleet measures (temporary cessation and permanent cessation of fishing activities, investments on boats) though still important, have gradually decreased. **Aquaculture and processing** continue to be important areas of investment for the EFF. Axis 4 (sustainable development of fisheries areas) is gradually progressing.

The last two years (2012-2013) show a decline in EFF support to measures under Axis 1 (adjustment of the fleet) while support to Axis 2 measures increased, both for aquaculture and for processing, with a high level of private funding for processing.

Investments in aquaculture were the second largest for the EFF, behind processing. Axis 3 (measures of common interest) also seems to be making progress although at a slower pace. The implementation of Axis 4 progressed well in 2013, but still lags behind the rest.

**Audit:** in 2013, the commission carried out a review of the work of the audit authorities in certain Member States. Seven operational programmes were audited. The Commission concluded that, in all cases, the opinions of the audit authorities were reliable (although some improvements were needed).